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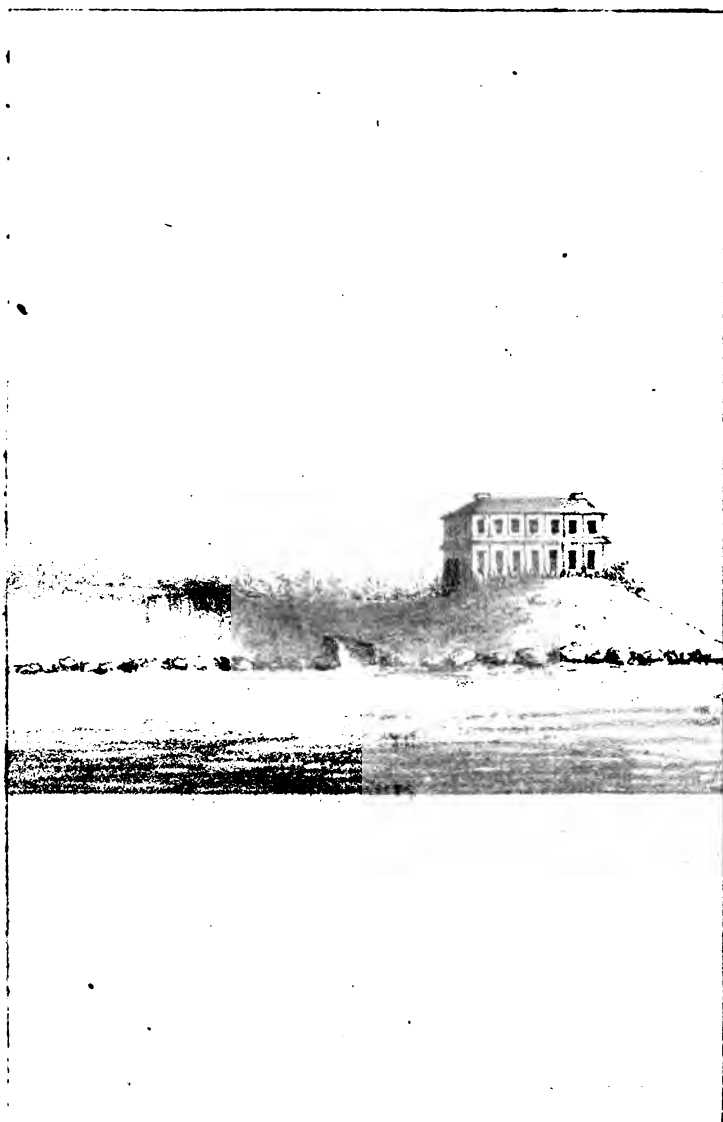
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*The Gift of R. N. Purser
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SKETCHES

OF

BERMUDA,

OR

SOMERS' ISLANDS.

BY

RICHARD COTTER, PURSER, R. N.

London:

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TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
PRINCE WILLIAM HENRY,
DUKE OF CLARENCE AND ST. ANDREW'S,
EARL OF MUNSTER,
GENERAL OF MARINES,
LORD HIGH ADMIRAL OF GREAT BRITAIN,
K. G. K. T. K. S. E. D. C. L. & F. R. S.

THE FOLLOWING

Sketches of Bermuda, or Somers' Islands,

ARE,

BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS'S GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS' MOST GRATEFUL,

MOST OBEDIENT,

AND DEVOTED SERVANT,

RICHARD COTTER.

PREFACE.

THE obscurity in which the **Bermuda's,** or **Somers' Islands,** have remained in point of historical facts, since they were first peopled, and my fruitless endeavours to gain information respecting that Colony, on my appointment to a public situation there, four years ago, determined me to glean all I could during a residence of that period.

I am free to confess that I had many motives in collecting all I could on a place that at first sight interested me in no trifling degree.

The friendly hospitality of the men, the mild and gentle demeanour of the women, that needed not a frown to awe the libertine to respect them, the curiosity natural to a citizen of the world, the wish to become useful to my country, and last, though not least, a desire to make my researches as advantageous as possible to my numerous family, were irresistible inducements, first to collect all the materials I could, and now to trust my feelings and my fate to a generous public.

That the work is not copious I trust my readers will attribute to no wish on my part to save myself; my maxim has always been to spare one's friends double postage when one sheet could contain all that was necessary to say: besides when one of the first writers of the age declared,

after several years residence at Bermuda, that its annals afforded nothing upon which a history could be founded, it would be great presumption in a man who has spent his life at sea to attempt swelling out those annals into a large volume.

The necessity of a work of this sort, laconic as it unavoidably is, will appear evident for many reasons, some of which are illustrated in the two following anecdotes, which will for many years be mentioned with mirth at Bermuda, as well as all other places resorted to by those acquainted with its localities.

An application was made to the Governor, from one of the principal departments in London for some bows and arrows and Spanish hammocks, as if

Bermuda, instead of being situate in the midst of the Western Ocean, formed part of South America.

In the other instance, an application was made to allow a man a shilling a-day for winding up a clock and keeping it in order; the reply was "that no such allowance could be made, but if the clock wanted repair, the officer of the department was to send for a *Clock-maker to the neat town.*" Now throughout Bermuda there is not a place worthy of being called a *town*, nor any artisan who presumes to call himself a clock-maker, and if a clock-maker resided either at St. George's or Hamilton, he would not inspect the clock in question twice a-year for the sum proposed to be paid to the man living on the spot.

SKETCHES
OF
THE BERMUDA,
OR
SOMERS' ISLANDS

THAT good often results from what we consider the greatest misfortune, is verified in the discovery of this interesting group of Islands.

The first Englishman who landed at Bermuda was one Henry May; he belonged to an English East Indiaman, which, on her voyage homeward, put into St. Domingo in distress, in 1593; May was dispatched

in a French vessel to acquaint the owners of his ship of her state, but wrecked at Bermuda the 17th of December in that year. There were one hundred and fifty souls on board, but they all perished except May and twenty-five Frenchmen, who contrived to get on shore in their boats. On searching about for provisions and water, they fell in with several pieces of Spanish coin and three wrecks; one of these, a Spanish ship called the *Bermudas*,* was wrecked on her passage from Old Spain to Cuba, whither she was taking a cargo of live hogs, many of which were found by May's party on exploring the

* It is asserted by some that these islands were named after the master of the vessel, Juan Bermudas.

islands, but in so lean a state that they were not fit to eat.

This disastrous party, with every difficulty to labour against, constructed a raft on which they proceeded to sea on the 11th of May, 1594, their sea stock consisting of thirty live turtle, a quantity of Palmetto berries in lieu of bread, and two chests of water. These chests were made water-tight, as was their raft, by a cement composed of oil and lime. On the 20th they had the good fortune to make Cape Breton, (then inhabited by savages) where they only remained four hours, to take a supply of wood and water. They proceeded thence to the banks of Newfoundland, where they met several vessels, but

none would receive them until they fell in with an English bark, bound to Falmouth, whose Captain kindly entertained them, and having in a few days met with a French ship, to which he transferred his guests of that nation, took May with him to England.

In May, 1609, Sir George Somers and Sir Thomas Gates were sent from England with five hundred people, in nine ships, to Virginia, the Virginians having received a new Charter from King James in that year. On the 25th of July they dispersed in a hurricane, which so disabled Sir George's ship, (the *Sea Adventure*,) that she became so unmanageable and leaky, the people on board, one hundred and

fifty in number, gave up all idea of saving their lives, and lay down on deck, wishing each other a happier meeting in a better world. The boundless mercy of Heaven soon rewarded them for their pious resignation. Sir George, who is described as using every effort to save the ship, and with her the lives of those entrusted to his charge, discovered land from the poop; the ship soon after struck on a rock, and was driven from one to another, until she was placed in as upright a position as if she was on the stocks.

In a short time every soul was landed, where with fishing and hunting they had an ample supply of fresh and wholesome food. The hogs had so encreased since

May's time, that they killed thirty-two the first day. The adventurers found such abundance of food here that many of them did not wish to leave it, but Sir George and his principal companions thought it necessary to acquaint his friends in Virginia with his disaster, and accordingly the long boat was decked, and having been manned with eight men, and a Mr. Rouen as their commander, she sailed for Virginia, but was never heard of more. When the time had arrived that the return of the long boat might be expected, they commenced building two vessels of the cedar of the country; one was called the *Patience* and the other the *Deliverance*. While these vessels were in progress two children were born; one a boy,

was called Bermudas, the other a girl, Bermuda.

On the 10th of May, 1610, the two cedar vessels having been completed, Sir George and his companions embarked once more for Virginia, leaving behind them Christopher Carter and Edward Waters, two offenders, who fled to the woods to escape punishment.

It would appear that previously to the shipwreck of Sir George Somers at Bermuda, Captain Smith, then Governor of Virginia, had caused two savages to be landed there, named Namuntack and Matchamps; these two having quarrelled, Matchamps slew the other. The hole

which the murderer made to bury his victim in being too short, he cut off his legs and laid them by his side. All this was done with so much secrecy that the murderer was not even suspected, until he confessed his horrid crime at Virginia.

The two little cedar vessels, about thirty tons each, having arrived at Virginia in fourteen days, Sir George intended returning to England, but the Governor being desirous of having some of the hogs from Bermuda, Sir George, fearing the execution of that service might be assigned to one less skilful than himself, became a volunteer on the occasion, and accordingly he set sail on the 19th of June. His voyage was tedious, and so boisterous that

he died of fatigue soon after his arrival, on that part of Bermuda where the town of St. George now stands. His faithful and much attached companions conveyed his body to Whitchurch in Dorsetshire.

In the year 1619, Captain Nathaniel Butler, then Governor of Bermuda, caused a marble monument to be erected on the spot where his heart and intestines were buried, with the following inscription:

“In the year ————— 1611,
Noble Sir John Somers went hence to Heaven,
Whose noble well-tried worth that held him still
employed,
Gave him the knowledge of the world so wide;
Hence, 'twas by Heaven's desire that to this place
He brought new guests and name to mutual grace,
At last his soul and body being to part,
He here bequeath'd his entrails and his heart.”

Captain Mathew Somers, nephew of Sir George, and companion of his voyages, accompanied his remains to England; but although the accounts they gave of the Bermuda or Somers' Islands so clearly corresponded with May's narration, few in England believed there were such islands. The Colonists of Virginia having no doubt as to that point, a company was formed, consisting of one hundred and twenty persons, sixty of whom proceeded to Bermuda, where they found Carter and Waters, who deserted from Sir George Somers, and another man, named Chard, who preferred remaining at Bermuda to going to England in the vessel that took home the body of their kind old leader. These men had contrived to

grow a good stock of corn, and collected a quantity of ambergris. Mr. Richard More, a Carpenter by trade, was appointed by the Virginia company Governor of this New Colony; he devoted his whole time to the erection of fortifications, so that the people had not time to provide food, and a famine was the consequence; a ship that brought some meal to relieve the poor sufferers introduced so many rats that they have become a curse to the islands to this day.

Their doubts in England as to the existence of Bermuda having been dispelled, many supplies of men and provisions were sent out during the three years government of More. Several

West India plants were introduced, many of which succeeded to the utmost extent of their hopes; and at this period an English Company appears to have laid claim to Bermuda, the ambergris having proved too great a temptation to resist. More, from the sparing manner in which he supplied them with provisions, incurred their displeasure, which together with his not feeling himself popular at Bermuda, induced him to leave the government in the hands of six persons (among whom were Carter and Waters) and proceed to England.

The six, who ruled one month each in rotation, were succeeded by Captain Daniel Tucker in 1616; he soon turned his mind

to the divisions of the land, and parted it into eight tribes or companies, each tribe into fifty shares, and each share containing thirty acres. In this work he was assisted by Mr. Richard Norwood, a Surveyor. St. George's, St. David's, Cooper's, Longbird, Smith's and Nonsuch Islands, and a part of the main, or Bermuda Island, together with several small island, were not included in these tribes, but reserved for public uses, and called general land.

The Archives of the Colony present nothing worthy of notice after this period, and tradition hands down no more than the quarrels between a long succession of Governors and the people.

The geographical position of the Colony is latitude $32^{\circ} 25'$ north, and longitude $64^{\circ} 44'$ west. Its extreme length from St. Catherine's point, on the island of St. George's, to the west extremity of Bermuda, (or the Main, as the natives call it) is not more than twenty miles, but the road continues round the Great Sound to the north east point of Somerset, making the distance twenty-four miles. The greatest breadth from north to south, by land, is about a mile and half. The Colony contains about 12,161 acres.

No stranger of common prudence would attempt any of the anchorages without a Pilot, many of whom are always on the look out, and put to sea when a vessel heaves in sight.

In December, 1824, some vessels were discovered off Bermuda, when James Forbes, a black man, and one of the principal Pilots, imagining it was the Admiral with the squadron from Halifax, put to sea. Ere he could reach any ship a gale came on, which increased as the night advanced; before morning he lost his mast, and had the additional distress of being driven out of sight of land, without quadrant, compass, provisions or water, (except a few pieces of pork) with three other blacks on board. They having saved the wreck of their mast, which was carried away at the partners, were employed all day (in consequence of a deficiency of implements) in placing it in the step, and by reefing their sail reduced it to the

hoist their jury mast admitted. Thus rigged, they sailed about, quite ignorant of the direction of the place whence they had been driven. Several days had elapsed before they saw any vessel, but they made the best of their way to the first they saw, (about the fifth day;) they came in such a "questionable shape" that the stranger fled: in this way were they tantalized for nearly a fortnight, between Bermuda and America, the trading vessels they got sight of taking them for pirates.

The Bermudian boats are of a peculiar construction and rig—they are of a light draught of water forward, but have what is called a long heel or deep sternpost, and are rigged with one mast and bow-



sprit, carrying a triangular mainsail, a foresail and jib, and occasionally a gaff topsail and square sail. Reduced to the necessity of chewing lead to keep up the moisture in the mouth, which nature required, they were on the point of resigning themselves to that fate which seemed inevitable, when Providence brought them in contact with a vessel that gave them succour.

The greatest anxiety prevailed at Bermuda, as to the fate of this disastrous boat and her crew. Forbes was a man past the climax of life, and considered the best Pilot in the place; and when he made his appearance at the end of three weeks, the pleasure depicted in every countenance

when his return was mentioned, could not be greater if he was the first man in the Colony. The Admiral, who arrived two days after Forbes had been driven off the islands, sent vessels in all directions to pick him up; the Governor also showed a strong feeling in his favour, and the Commissioner, with a most laudable intention of setting the poor fellow's mind at rest, gave orders that his boat should be refitted at the public expence. Poor Forbes and one of his men were severely visited by sickness, occasioned by their loss of rest, food and water for so long a period, and the consequent anxiety which people in their situation may be supposed to feel. The age of Forbes was between fifty and sixty.

The principal places of anchorage are, St. George's Harbour with a bar, over which there are, at high water, spring tides, nineteen feet, but deep enough within that for ships of any burthen; Murray's Anchorage, extending from St. Catherine's Point to the Ferry; the entrance to which is very intricate, but is well marked with buoys; this is the channel to Grassy Bay, off the Dock Yard in Ireland Island, the general rendezvous for His Majesty's Ships, and also Hamilton, situated at the head of the Little Sound.

Castle Harbour was formerly the rendezvous for our ships of war, until a privateer under American colours, (in the revolutionary war) commanded by a Ber-

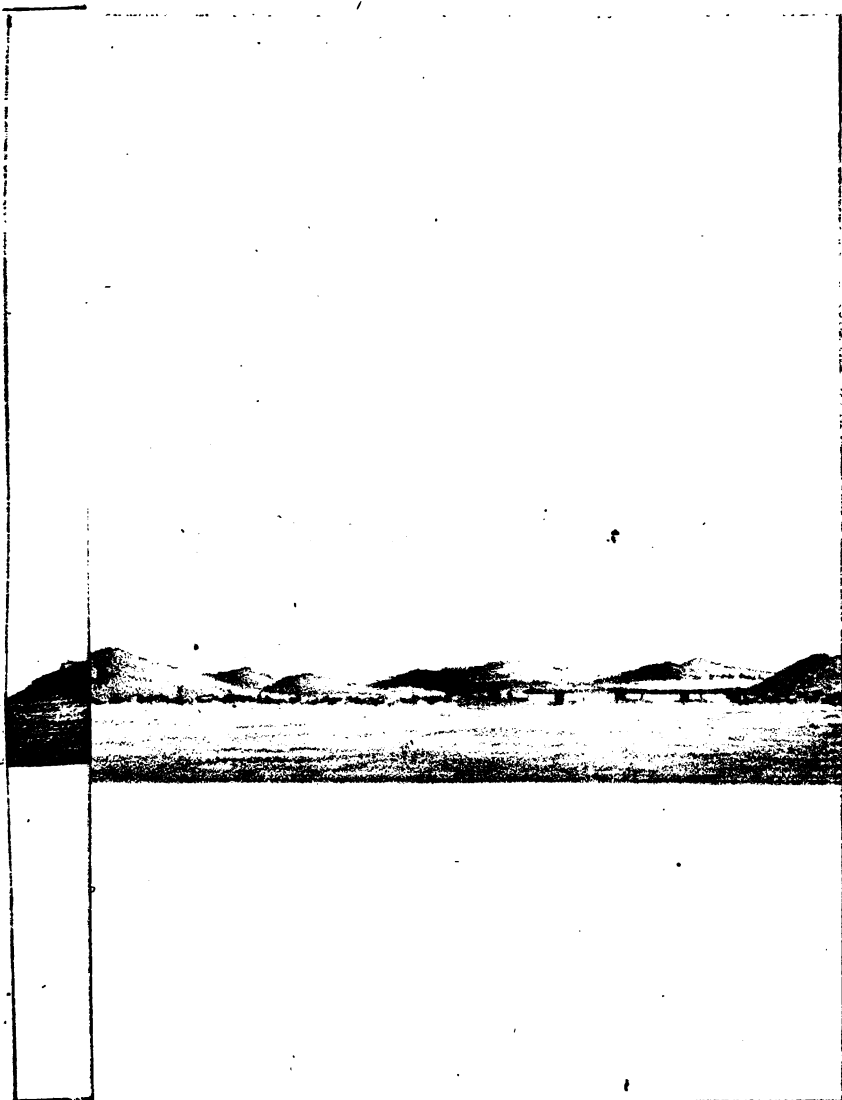
mudian, had tauntingly sent a challenge to the Cerberus Frigate, knowing that she could not get out without great risk, when the Captain, unable to bear such impudence any longer, got his ship under weigh, contrary to the advice of the Pilot. The frigate, in endeavouring to get out, struck on a rock, and became a total wreck, which was the cause of discontinuing this as an anchorage for His Majesty's ships.

Ships may approach within a mile of the land on the south side, there being no hidden danger, but on the north side there is a reef of coral, about three leagues from land, extending from the North Rock. Bearing north from St. Catherine's Point

to the western extremity of the Colony; there is, however, a passage through, a-breast a Point called Wreck Hill, in Somerset Parish, which is only frequented by vessels of light draught of water. There is also a passage near the North Rock, but which is never resorted to except in cases of great necessity.

Many skilful Mariners and Pilots are of opinion that Grassy Bay is not well chosen as an anchorage for His Majesty's ships; the channel from St. Catherine's Point is almost daily reduced in width and depth of water, owing to the influx of sea weed into the Great Sound, and the rapid growth of coral. What it has already cost to form one hundred yards

of the intended breakwater, would cut away sufficient of the bar of St. George's Harbour, and form piers from St. George's and Paget's Islands, so as to enable a ship of any force to get to sea in less than a hour; whereas ships (the Ganges and Superb for instance) have been detained several days, in consequence of the wind not answering to enable them to get through the intricate channel from Murray's anchorage. Some are of opinion that a passage might be cut into Harrington Sound from Murray's anchorage, near the flats; the distance is not more than five hundred yards, and the ships would get at once into a lake seven miles in circumference, with fifteen fathoms water, and situated in the heart of the



Colony. This would not avoid the ordeal of the entrance off St. Catherine's Point, but one great object would be attained by its being a check to an invading army, as it covers the land which passes from one end of the Colony to the other. There is but one visible channel for the flux and reflux of the tide at this lake, situated at the Flat's Bridge; this bridge consists of three stone piers, the extremes about thirty feet apart, with planks laid from one to the other, to connect the roads at each side. People unacquainted with the various and extensive caves with which Bermuda abounds, would be at a loss to account for the variance in the tides at the springs and neaps; the former, which rise in every other part of the shores of

the Colony five feet, only rise twenty-three inches in Harrington Sound, and the latter only three inches; when outside they rise four feet. It may, therefore, be inferred that the subterraneous passage, probably from Castle Harbour, which lies to the southward and eastward of this lake, is above the reach of neap tides.* There are four islands in Harrington sound that require little expence to fortify.

One would almost suppose that Shakespeare had visited Bermuda before he

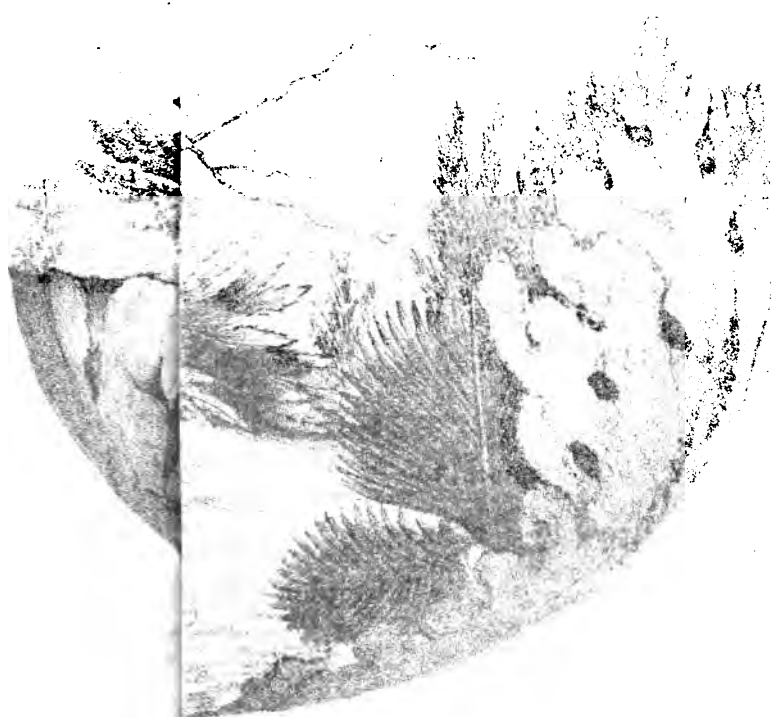
* There are four lakes in the neck of land that bounds Harrington Sound to the southward, in which the ebb and flow of the tide is evident, although there is no visible communication with the sea.

had fixed upon it as the scene of his Tempest; at first sight it appears a perfect fairy land, but this enchantment does not last long, and the curious, tired of gazing on the leafless evergreen cedar, the barren rock, and various sheets of salt water, teeming with fish, corresponding in variety of denominations with the four hundred islands said to compose the Colony, descend to the regions below, to gratify their curiosity, in viewing, by torch-light, the freaks of nature in the formation of the varied interstices, stalactites and stalagmites with which the caves abound.

The caves at an estate called Walsingham are considered the best in the

Colony, and the scenery of that and a neighbouring estate, called Paynter Vale, on the south east margin of Harrington Sound, are allowed to be the most picturesque in Bermuda. The shade of the Calabash Tree, noticed in the writings of our celebrated poet Moore, and which time only appears to have improved, is still the resting place of the pic nic parties from St. George's and other parts of the Colony.

It has become too much the fashion amongst the officers of the various branches of the public service to ridicule the Bermudians, after partaking of their hospitality, but the latter are not inferior in any particular to the people of the



HAM.

mother country; the women are as chaste and as fair, and the men as clever, as friendly, and as hospitable too in proportion to their relative means. It is true, that owing to the relaxation consequent to a warm climate, added to the expensiveness of apparel, the ladies do not find it convenient *to be at home* at all times to receive idle visitors, but at the Governor's parties, public balls, and amateur plays, they are neatly dressed, and each lady may claim the merit of being her own dress-maker.

The men of business are shrewd and well informed, many of them have acquired their knowledge of trade in America, the mode of that country being better suited

to the limited traffic of Bermuda, than the broad scale upon which the mercandize of England is conducted.

The visit of the Bishop of Nova Scotia, in 1826, gave great satisfaction. His Lordship consecrated all the churches and burial grounds, and confirmed such as were disposed and qualified, without any distinction of colour. His dignity of demeanour, urbanity of manners, and impressive and persuasive discourses, stamped on the hearts of the Bermudians a veneration and respect that will not be soon forgotten.

The Church Establishment at Bermuda is composed of one archdeacon, four

rectors, and one curate, exclusive of the chaplain of the dock yard and convicts.

The Bermudians are very tenacious of what they consider their Rights and Privileges. On one occasion, a favourite preacher had exchanged duties, for only one Sunday, with a brother rector, but either through mistake or otherwise did not apprise his parishioners of it, and the stranger had the mortification to see, in a few minutes after he commenced the morning service, his congregation dwindle down to the parish clerk and one old woman. At the evening service he was treated in the same way at a neighbouring church, each rector having to attend two churches.

They give great encouragement to competent Schoolmasters from England; they ensure them £200 currency per annum, with ten pounds for each scholar above the number of twenty; this liberal plan has brought several clever men amongst them, many of whom have been admitted to Holy Orders.

A house has been erected in the centre of the Colony, with an intention of forming a finishing academy, but the want of unanimity amongst the heads of families of the better class, for whose children it was intended, prevented the fulfilment of the design, and the house is now fast approaching to decay.

All the offices connected with the jurisprudence of the country are wisely confided to native gentlemen, who have been educated in England. The Chief Justice, the Attorney General, and several barristers, all eminent in their respective situations, are Bermudians.

Although all the blacks, and some of the lower order of whites, are prone to petty thieving, such as stealing poultry, fruit and vegetables; capital offences are very rare. A case, however, under very aggravated circumstances, has occurred lately. A man of general bad character, whose son had been committed to jail for an assault, (he having refused to give bail) worked himself up for several days

to a most wrathful spirit of revenge, and having armed himself with a dirk and pistol, proceeded after] nightfall to the house of the committing magistrate, a medical officer of the garrison at St. George's, who having been providentially put on his guard a few minutes before the arrival of the assassin, avoided the destruction intended for him, and the wretch thus disappointed was returning toward the jail, when unfortunately meeting with Mr. Folger, an Englishman, and a much respected merchant of St. George's, who was married to the sister-in-law of the first intended victim; the murderer, after using some abusive language, placed a pistol, loaded with powder and small shot, so close to Mr. Folger's side, that in dis-

charging it the coat, waistcoat, and shirt of the unfortunate victim, who died in the prime of life a few hours after, were burnt; immediately after this horrid act, the murderer, on passing Mrs. Folger, (who was aware of her husband's danger, and looking out from the veranda of her house,) exclaimed, exultingly, "I have done for him." Although all these circumstances were fully proved before a jury, by several respectable witnesses, the jury, (after a most impartial trial, and the Chief Justice's charge, in which nothing was omitted that could favour the prisoner's case,) were five hours before they could come to an unanimous verdict: that was, of course, to the prisoner, an awful verdict; but the laws of Bermuda not allowing

sentence to be passed, even in cases of murder, until the expiration of a certain number of days after the termination of the sessions, the wretch remained in awful and hopeless suspense during that period. Soon after he expiated his horrid crime on a temporary gallows, erected on the spot where poor Folger fell by his hand. The infrequency of capital punishments procrastinated the misery of this wretched culprit. The Provost Martial was under the necessity of giving one hundred dollars to a mulatto fellow to perform the duty of hangman, and the solemnity of the procession from the jail to the place of execution (about three hundred yards) was considerably lessened by the attendance of the executioner in female attire,

and not before he divested himself of his gloves and mask, could he put the unfortunate wretch out of misery. Another case, revolting to human nature, has just occurred. A black man, who has passed for a female for the last ten years at St. George's, has been found guilty, and only awaits the usual period to have the awful sentence of the law pronounced against him.

The infrequency of sudden death by conflict or suicide, is evinced in the following tradition. A few years ago a coroner's jury was held to decide on the case of a man, who met his death in consequence of having received, in a quarrel, a blow from a sledge hammer, in a black-

smith's forge at Hamilton. The man died in two days after having received the blow, but such cases were so novel that the jurors were at a loss to form a verdict, when the coroner (a schoolmaster near Hamilton) drew from his pocket a mutilated paper, the rough draught of an inquest held on a gentleman who had been found drowned in a cave at Port Royal Parish (the sea communicates with all the caves at Bermuda.) The inquirers copied this instrument verbatim, except changing the name of the defunct, and pronounced the man who had come by his death in consequence of the quarrel at a blacksmith's shop at Hamilton, as "found drowned in Bassett's Cave."

The Laws of Bermuda are regulated and enacted by the Governor and Council, and the House of Assembly. They originate with the latter, but the Council have the veto vested in them, and being created by the breath of the Governor, of course no Act can pass into a law without His Excellency's full approval. The Colony being divided into nine parishes, each parish sends four members to the House of Assembly, and the Governor has the power of dissolving this Senate whenever he pleases; in short it is like all our other Colonial Governments. The Members of the House of Assembly are allowed two dollars a-day, while in attendance at their post. There is a story told of a member, who was a boat-builder,

and being anxious to make the most of his time, hauled up a boat that he had to repair as close to the Senate House as possible, upon which he used to go to work, leaving word with the man in attendance at the door of the house, to call him when any question came to the vote, but in the event of his being too late, he would vote at the same side with a member whose name he mentioned.

There are but two small Towns (St. George's and Hamilton) in Bermuda, each of which have a Mayor and other Civic Officers. The former was the Capital until the government of Sir James Cockburn, when the business of the Senate and Courts of Justice was removed

to Hamilton, which, from its central position, is much more conveniently situated for the Law Officers, the Members of the House of Assembly, and Jurymen, as may be seen by the map. The inhabitants, to mark their sense of the kind consideration of Sir James, voted him a present of four thousand pounds, but such was the delicacy of His Excellency, that he would not accept it until sanctioned by the Government at home.

There is a great want of taste displayed in the architecture of Bermuda, even in their two little towns; the houses remind one of an unorganized Corps of American Militia, where men of every stature take their stations indiscriminately. The coun-

try houses are still more shapeless and disproportioned, the mode being to build merely what is indispensibly necessary at first, and adding a room for every increase of the family, producing often a pile as shapeless as that occasioned by the eruption of a volcano; and to crown all, an appendage, which is hid with great care in England, has the most conspicuous situation on the premises of a Bermudian, almost invariably terminating in a ball at the top, which is usually painted yellow.

A little to the westward of Hamilton is a house, which the midshipmen of the squadron have designated the Almshouse, from its resemblance to the long ranges

of building under that name in our country towns in England; and at the opposite side of the harbour is a house which they have christened the cruet-stand, from its similitude in shape, or rather shapelessness, to that useful article of furniture. This must have been devised by the owner in derision of the people of some other country, as the Bermudians have neither vinegar nor [cayenne in their composition, and a stranger who does not meet kind treatment from them has to blame himself only.

Bermuda abounds in Limestone, in many places mixed with marine shells, of which with their underwood they make excellent lime at a cheap rate, and with

the facility of getting timber from our North American Colonies, and the soft or sand stone, veins of which are to be found every where in Bermuda, enables them to run up a house speedily at little expence. Strangers are amused at seeing a Bermudian mason using a saw and hatchet in making a stone wall. This stone is cut out with pick axes, in large square blocks, and afterwards sawed into lesser ones to suit the intended work.

There are a few wells at Bermuda but no fresh water streams; the water from these wells is very brackish, and does not agree with Europeans. Every house has a tank attached to it, the roof acting as a

conductor in the rainy season. These tanks are sounded after a shower, and the increase is always a subject of congratulation between the old dames, which proves a source of mirth to our young naval punsters. Many of the respectable inhabitants are so kind as to have an extra tank, from which they supply their indigent neighbours in times of scarcity. There is a strange inconsistency in the mode of supplying the navy with water; a place is enclosed near Mount Langton, (the general residence of the Governor, who has another house at St. George's, little resorted to) about a mile from Hamilton, called the Wells; these wells are sunk considerably under low water mark, and consequently the water is very

unwholesome, but is supplied His Majesty's Ships when the military tank at St. Catherine's Point runs short. The expence of the floating tank, which conveys this water for one year, would form a tank in Ireland Island, with pipes and wharfs, sufficiently extensive to supply any fleet we shall ever have at Bermuda, and save the lives of several valuable seamen who are on this service employed in an intricate navigation of fourteen miles and back.

A superb mansion has lately been erected for the Naval Commissioner, but in a place like Bermuda, where there is not a house of public entertainment fit for the reception of a gentleman, and the extensive acquaintance which an officer

might be supposed to form before he can arrive at that rank, a house of such extent exposes him to expences beyond the income allowed.

Although the communications between the different islands and parts of Bermuda are generally, and in the former cases necessarily, by water, the roads are tolerably good. In the heavy rains they are partially inundated in the little vallies, but in a few hours become as hard and dry as ever. A muddy road is unknown here.

There are three signal stations, one at St. George's, (the head quarters,) another at Mount Langton, and the other at

Gibbs' Hill, at each of which a small party of soldiers is stationed. There is also a Flag Staff at the Commissioner's House in the Dock Yard, which communicates with Mount Langton, and through that with the other two stations.

A detachment of engineers, and two companies of the line, are stationed on Ireland Island.

The population of Bermuda is between nine and ten thousand souls, (if negroes have souls, and one is apt to be of uncle Toby's opinion, that "it would be putting one sadly over the head of another if they had not,") something more than half of this number are whites, of whom nearly

two-thirds are females. This may be accounted for in part from the men, who are of an enterprising spirit, being often obliged to risk their lives in crazy little vessels, badly manned and indifferently navigated, to the West Indies and different parts of America, in search of a field for industry in a commercial line, which their little Colony does not afford.

The attachment of the women does not die with their husbands; there are many instances where a lady, widowed in the prime of youth, rejects every offer of conjugal consolation, however advantageous, during the rest of her life.

The negro population of Bermuda (all

natives) is distressing to their owners, as well as to the Colony in general, and the prohibition of sending them to the West India Islands falls heavily on them, inasmuch as the owners are obliged to have recourse to America for live stock, flour, India corn, and corn meal for their maintenance; added to which, the arrival of seven hundred convicts for the public works, threw back upon their (in several instances) helpless owners, many of this ill-fated race of our species.

Many of the females of Bermuda have no other property than a place to live in and a few slaves, left them by their deceased relatives. There being little field work, the black children being che-

rished as property, are brought up in the house of their mothers' owners, and become playmates to the owners' children; this creates an attachment that lasts through life.

An instance of this occurred not long ago. A lady complained to a magistrate of a negro man having struck a negress, (a fellow slave;) the case having been fully proved, the magistrate ordered the delinquent to be punished, when the mistress exclaimed in agony, "what! flog my poor Jem, who has been brought up from infancy with me," and fainted. The female slave joined her supplications to the silent but powerful eloquence of the mistress, and Jem of course had his punishment remitted.

Of the twelve thousand acres which Bermuda is said to contain, two thousand might be brought into cultivation if there was less veneration for cedar trees, and a trifling exertion made to drain or embank the marshes, whereas at present there are not two hundred acres disturbed by the spade or the plough; indeed there is but one plough in the Colony, and that belongs to an Englishman named Winsor, who has proved what could be made of ground apparently barren.

A Bill was brought forward in the early part of the Sessions of 1827, proposing a bounty for the growth of the several sorts of grain, by John Walker,

Esq. a most active and patriotic colonist, but was lost in its progress.

The facility of receiving supplies from America, has too long made the Bermudians regardless of internal resources; and the produce of the soil, even with the quick succession and perpetual vegetation, will not keep pace with the active mind of a man accustomed from boyhood to the more quick returns of commercial speculations.

Thus the agriculture of Bermuda has been neglected, but it is hoped that the ill-judged spirit of restriction adopted by the Americans, will bring the Bermudians to a just appreciation of the

resources which Nature has blessed them with.

There is scarcely any thing in the vegetable way which Bermuda cannot produce; it is very fertile in the growth of esculent plants and roots, such as potatoes, onions, cabbages, carrots, turnips, peas, French beans, &c.; also pumpkins and melons, which grow here in great perfection, but the luxuriance with which they grow renders them more susceptible of the transient but blighting winds of the climate, particularly if not fenced to guard against such winds, which is seldom the case. The grubs too become so numerous after a hot summer that they are very destructive of succulent

plants; however the rapidity of vegetation atones for all these impediments, and the cultivator will find his account in persevering. There being no means of preserving the potatoes and onions of Bermudian growth after they have ceased to grow, such as are not consumed during the progress of their growth are exported to the West Indies, and the Colony is dependant on America until the next season for the supply of those very necessary articles of food. The potatoes are rendered unfit for store by their early and constant vegetation, which often takes place before the cultivator thinks them ripe; but the speedy decay of the onions may be accounted for by the practice of transplanting them when they first begin

to form a bulb, which occasions them to throw out the seeding tube, thereby destroying the stamina necessary for their keeping from a state of decay even for a few weeks. This mode of cultivation, however, renders them of a much milder nature than the onions grown in England.

The citron, sour orange, lemon and lime grow here spontaneously in great luxuriance, but the apple and the peach come to no perfection for want of the skilful use of the pruning knife. The climate is well adapted to the growth of grapes, but the Bermudians are too sparing of the knife to be good horticulturists, and are almost entirely indebted to Nature for the produce of the soil.

The castor, aloe, jalap, and several other medicinal plants grow here in great perfection without the aid of cultivation. They grow a great quantity of arrowroot, which is admitted to be of superior quality to that produced in any other place. Coffee, indigo, cotton and tobacco, also grow here without culture.

Almost all the occupiers of land sow a small quantity of barley, but in getting in their harvest they seem to scorn the copying system; neither scythe nor sickle are in use, but an old woman (generally a black) is furnished with a basket, and a pair of scissors of equal standing in the family with herself: thus equipped, she proceeds to cut off the ears of Barley,

and in the course of time she has the satisfaction to see a *whole rood of barley* reduced to headless straw, which is soon converted into bonnets. Europeans are highly amused on witnessing this novel mode of farming. Their method of preparing the barley is by boiling it into a thick jelly, which they call barley broth, having first deprived it of its husks in a mortar.

If the English Merchants find their account in fitting ships for the Whale Fishery in the South Seas and off Greenland, it must prove a profitable employment at Bermuda, where the expence of equipment is comparatively trifling, the greater number forming the crews of the

whale boats being the property of the proprietors of the fishery. One good fish covers the expences of the season, and sometimes they are fortunate enough to take six, or more. The season commences in March and ends in June. The capital required is too small to prevent competition. Two boats with the necessary gear, a furnace to reduce the blubber to oil, and the necessary number of casks, which are very cheap here, forming the principal part of the equipment. On the south side of the Colony the whales approach within a mile of the land, and during the season men are stationed on the cliffs to give intimation when a whale appears. This huge fish seldom appears singly; the female and her young one (a

little baby about forty feet in length) are always together, and the experienced whalers invariably strive to strike the young one first, as the dam never forsakes it while any appearance of life remains, and almost on every occasion falls a victim to her maternal affection. When a whale is killed the boats tow it, if not prevented by unfavourable weather, as close to the shore as possible; the shore is lined by black people of both sexes and all ages; the men assist in cutting off the blubber, taking care to help themselves and friends to all the fleshy parts,* which they uncover; the noise and confusion is beyond description, women and children calling

* This is called in Bermuda "sea beef."

to the operators, who from time to time throw large pieces of the flesh on shore, but sometimes it falls short, when a simultaneous rush is made into the water, the scramble becomes a scuffle, and heavy blows are often exchanged. In a few hours, a whale approaching to sixty feet in length is reduced to a skeleton, and scarcely a house, whether occupied by whites or blacks, where a treat of whale beef does not take place that day or the next. The English have a strong prejudice against this food, but they soon get over that, particularly when the flesh is that of a young whale; the Bermudians have a method of cleansing it, which leaves no fishy flavour, and it is as tender as veal. Should the whalers be obliged

to moor the fish at sea, they seldom have any further trouble with it, as the sharks, which are in great abundance in that season, generally devour it before morning. The produce in oil from each whale is from thirty to sixty barrels, which is sold from a quarter to half a dollar per gallon, according to the produce of the season.

The great variety and abundance of fish is considered by some the reverse of a blessing, as it draws off the attention of the lower orders from the cultivation of the soil. The better sort of people, and a few provident fishermen, have ponds which they stock in summer for winter supply, but the lower order of whites are

the most miserable of the human creation. When they catch fish, they reserve as much as will sustain nature as long as the price of what they sell will produce rum enough to keep them in a state of intoxication, using neither bread nor vegetables; their wives and children live on the bounty of the ladies of their respective neighbourhoods, who are without exception kind-hearted and charitable. These fishermen live in hovels or old ruins, and are little encumbered with cloathing.

It would be an endless task to attempt a description of the numerous sorts of fish with which the shores of Bermuda abound, they are almost all of fine flavour and very rich; the principal are the rock

fish, grouper, hog fish, red and grey snappers, amber-fish, mullet, angel-fish, and paugye or porkie. The grouper has three distinct denominations, first hamlet, when weighing three or four pounds; next hamlet grouper, when half grown, and finally grouper, when arrived at its full growth, weighing from twenty to thirty pounds. The grey snapper is called the mudian lawyer, from their caution in avoiding hook and line, but the natives sometimes succeed in making them tipsy, by throwing amongst a school of them small fry well saturated with rum; when once off their guard they snap at every thing and are easily caught. Many small turtle are caught here during the summer, and are sold at a moderate rate

in comparison with the price of beef and mutton.

Bermuda, until the restriction of trade in 1826, derived all its supplies of oxen and sheep from the United States of America, but since that period the Bermudians have in part imitated the mode used by the Americans in naturalizing British subjects, and without the process of rocking the ox in a cradle, naturalize them in droves by driving them over the boundary into our North American dominions, and thence shipping them for our insulated Colonies.

The American Farmer has no other mart for the disposal of his surplus pro-

duce but our Colonies in the Western Archipelago, hence the restriction in commerce must press more heavily on the American citizens than on our Colonists; but this mode of supply is attended with greater expence, inasmuch as the Americans are cheaper carriers than the English.

Bermuda produces fresh butter and milk sufficient to meet the demand for those articles, but they do not rear more cattle than what are merely necessary to keep up their stock, killing the calves when about two months old. Except with a few who can afford to enclose their grounds, the cattle of Bermuda are tethered on the pasture; even hogs and goats can

range no farther than the length of their strings, the Bermudians being very jealous of trespassers. They rear but few sheep, there being scarcely any enclosure in the country capable of restraining the roving propensity of those animals. The country is very productive in the propagation of every species of domestic poultry except geese, which do not thrive here, although several have been introduced at various times from America. A few wild geese are sometimes driven thither in the winter gales; wild ducks are more numerous, but the grey plover visit Bermuda every September in great numbers. The quail of America, the red bird or Virginia nightingale, the blue bird, kingfisher, black or mocking bird, ground dove, tropic bird,

and a small species of wild pigeon are become natives of Bermuda. The red bird is so destructive to gardens and barley patches, that an Act of the Legislature was passed a few years ago, offering a reward of ten-pence for each head, but the blue bird not being graniverous is revered as the Robin is in England.

The possession of Bermuda, as the key of all our Western Colonies, is of the first importance to England, for if a foe of any maritime strength had possession of it, our trade would be exposed to much annoyance, if not to total destruction.

It is a mistaken notion that Bermuda cannot produce sufficient of all the

necessaries of life to support its population, even with its redundancy of blacks, if proper exertions were made to cultivate the soil, but it may be repeated that with half its present number of negroes the Colony would be more prosperous.

Bermuda being in the same parallel of latitude as Madeira, people are apt to consider it, without trial, as healthy as that Island, but a few years residence will convince an European of its fallacy. The atmosphere, in south-west winds, which are the prevailing ones, is very dense and damp, and if the constitution contains a germ of disease, it is sure to manifest itself; the rheumatic, the gouty,

and those affected in the liver or lungs, are soon obliged to change their climate, or reconcile themselves to a speedy dissolution.

The Colony is sometimes visited with the yellow fever, which often makes great havoc among the inhabitants, and the typhus is of late an annual visitor. The governors and natives have been at issue on the question, whether the yellow fever is indigenous to the climate or imported, the Governors being invariably of the latter opinion.

Few autumns pass without hurricanes of more or less violence, which are too well known to require description.

An interesting account of the proceedings of the Convict Establishment at Bermuda, including the Dock Yard, being in a state of progress for the press, it is deemed improper to touch upon those subjects in this little work.

FINIS.





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